What is claimed is:

CLAIMS

1   1.   A method comprising:

2   determining, at least in part at a first node, at least one communication protocol

3   via which a second node is capable of communicating with the first node, the determining

4   being based at least in part upon at least one parameter received from the second node

5   during an initialization of communication between the first node and the second node, the

6   at least one parameter specifying, at least in part, the at least one communication

7   protocol.

1   2.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   selecting, at least in part at the first node, one or more drivers capable of

3   implementing, at least in part, the at least one communication protocol.

1   3.   The method of claim 2, wherein:

2   the one or more drivers comprise at least one channel framing driver that is

3   capable of implementing, at least in part, at least one framing protocol that is compatible

4   with at least one of an Ethernet protocol and an Asynchronous Transfer Mode protocol.

1   4.   The method of claim 2, further comprising:

2   in response at least in part to the selecting, invoking a plug and play (PnP)

3   protocol manager to initiate loading, at least in part, of the one or more drivers into

4   memory.

1   5.   The method of claim 2, wherein:

2   the one or more drivers are capable of implementing, at least in part, at least one

3   encapsulation protocol that is compatible with an Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM)

4   protocol and an Ethernet protocol.

1   6.   The method of claim 1, wherein:

2   the first node comprises at least one modem driver; and

3   the determining is performed, at least in part, by the at least one modem driver.

1   7.   The method of claim 1, wherein:

2   the initialization of the communication comprises a negotiation between the first

3   node and the second node; and

4   in response at least in part to a request from the first node, the second node

5   transmits during the negotiation the at least one parameter to the first node.

1   8.   An apparatus comprising:

2   circuitry that is capable of determining, at least in part at a first node, at least one

3   communication protocol via which a second node is capable of communicating with the

4   first node, the circuitry being capable of determining the at least one communication

5   protocol based at least in part upon at least one parameter received by the first node from

6   the second node during an initialization of communication between the first node and the

7   second node, the at least one parameter specifying, at least in part, the at least one

8   communication protocol.

1   9.   The apparatus of claim 8, wherein:

2   the circuitry is also capable of selecting, at least in part at the first node, one or

3   more drivers capable of implementing, at least in part, the at least one communication

4   protocol.

1   10.   The apparatus of claim 9, wherein:

2   the one or more drivers comprise at least one channel framing driver that is

3   capable of implementing, at least in part, at least one framing protocol that is compatible

4   with at least one of an Ethernet protocol and an Asynchronous Transfer Mode protocol.

1   11.   The apparatus of claim 9, wherein:

2   the circuitry is also capable of invoking a plug and play (PnP) protocol manager

3   to initiate loading, at least in part, of the one or more drivers into memory.

1   12.   The apparatus of claim 9, wherein:

2   the one or more drivers are capable of implementing, at least in part, at least one

3 encapsulation protocol that is compatible with an Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM)

4 protocol and an Ethernet protocol.

1   13.   The apparatus of claim 9, wherein:

2   the circuitry is capable of executing at least one modem driver; and

3   execution of the at least one modem driver by the circuitry results, at least in part,

4 in the circuitry being capable, at least in part, of determining the at least one

5 communication protocol.

1   14.   The apparatus of claim 8, wherein:

2   the initialization of the communication comprises a negotiation between the first

3 node and the second node; and

4   in response at least in part to a request from the first node, the second node

5 transmits during the negotiation the at least one parameter to the first node.

1   15.   An article comprising:

2   a storage medium having stored thereon instructions that when executed by a

3 machine result in the following:

4   determining, at least in part at a first node, at least one communication protocol

5 via which a second node is capable of communicating with the first node, the determining

6 being based at least in part upon at least one parameter received from the second node

7 during an initialization of communication between the first node and the second node, the

8 at least one parameter specifying, at least in part, the at least one communication

9 protocol.

1   16.   The article of claim 15, wherein:

2   the instructions when executed by the machine also result in selecting, at least in

3 part at the first node, one or more drivers capable of implementing, at least in part, the at

4 least one communication protocol.

1 17. The article of claim 16, wherein:

2 the one or more drivers comprise at least one channel framing driver that is

3 capable of implementing, at least in part, at least one framing protocol that is compatible

4 with at least one of an Ethernet protocol and an Asynchronous Transfer Mode protocol.

1 18. The article of claim 16, wherein:

2 the instructions when executed by the machine also result in, in response at least

3 in part to the selecting of the one or more drivers, invoking a plug and play (PnP)

4 protocol manager to initiate loading, at least in part, of the one or more drivers into

5 memory.

1 19. The article of claim 16, wherein:

2 the one or more drivers are capable of implementing, at least in part, at least one

3 encapsulation protocol that is compatible with an Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM)

4 protocol and an Ethernet protocol.

1 20. The article of claim 15, wherein:

2 the first node comprises at least one modem driver; and

3 the determining of the at least one communication protocol is performed, at least

4 in part, by the at least one modem driver.

1 21. The article of claim 15, wherein:

2 the initialization of the communication comprises a negotiation between the first

3 node and the second node; and

4 in response at least in part to a request from the first node, the second node

5 transmits during the negotiation the at least one parameter to the first node.

1 22. A system comprising:

2 a first node comprising circuitry that includes a circuit card and a circuit board

3 that includes a circuit card slot that is capable of coupling the circuit card to the circuit

4 board; and

5   a second node;

6   the circuitry being capable of determining, at least in part, at least one

7   communication protocol via which the second node is capable of communicating with the

8   first node, the circuitry being capable of determining the at least one communication

9   protocol based at least in part upon at least one parameter received by the circuit card

10   from the second node during an initialization of communication between the first node

11   and the second node, the at least one parameter specifying, at least in part, the at least one

12   communication protocol.

1   23.   The system of claim 22, wherein:

2   the circuit board comprises a bus and a host processor coupled to the bus; and

3   when the circuit card is coupled to the slot, the circuitry is coupled to the bus.

1   24.   The system of claim 23, wherein:

2   the circuit card comprises a digital subscriber line (DSL) modem.

1   25.   The system of claim 24, wherein:

2   a central office (CO) comprises the second node; and

3   customer premises equipment (CPE) comprises the modem.